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The Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education, a consortium of 10 colleges, initiated an experimental study of a new model for off-campus education in selected problematic areas. The model places students and faculty members in Field Study Centers-- or Beachhead Colleges --to help solve local problems through interaction between themselves and the community. This interaction tests the relevance of education to community needs, and its utility in helping local people to eventually solve their own problems. Activities during the 6 months to a year spent at a center include seminar programs, projects and research studies, several of which link the center to the students' institutions. Two centers are already in operation, 1 on the underdeveloped island of Kauai, Hawaii and another in the Appalachian area of Pikeville, Kentucky. Two additional centers are planned for inner-city Chicago and for a suburb of New York City. Study results indicate that the Field Study Center model can be effective in different settings. The establishment of more centers is planned as capable faculty are discovered and more colleges make their students available for periods of 6 months to 1 year. (WM)

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Feasibility Study for the Establishment of Experimental Field Study Centers (Beachhead Colleges)

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The Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education is a consortium of ten colleges (with headquarters at Antioch College), formed in 1964 to foster educational research and experimentation. Member schools are Antioch, Bard, Goddard, Hofstra, Northeastern Illinois State, Monteith, Nasson, Sarah Lawrence, Shimer, and Stephens.

Composed of colleges committed to experimentation and research as a way of enriching, enlivening, and improving higher education, the Union exists for the purpose of searching for new ways and new programs of teaching and learning. In undertaking this search, it makes use of member schools, but also looks for ideas at other colleges and universities--in fact, wherever they are to be found. Conversely, one significant Union premise is that its activities and discoveries will have implications not merely for ten institutions, but for the entire American academic community.

FINAL REPORT

Feasibility Study for the Establishment of Experimental Field Study Centers (Beachhead Colleges)

SUMMARY

The idea for the Field Study Center Program grew out of a conference on "New Designs for Liberal Arts Colleges" held at Winter Park, Colorado, last December by the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education. Initial support for the development of the Center idea was obtained in February, 1967, from the U.S. Office of Education in the form of a $9,950.00 grant for a feasibility study to determine program and site locations.

Under the plan, faculty, students and local persons in a chosen area would work together in an attempt to deal with various problems of local and community needs. Four such centers were to be explored: The Inner-City, Appalachia, an Underdeveloped Region, and Suburbia. Depending on the particular situation, the amount of time a student would spend in a Field Study Center would vary from 6 months to a year. Appropriate seminar programs, projects, and research studies would be developed in connection with the student's Field Study Center activities.

Two centers are already underway: one on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, the other, the Appalachian Center in Pikeville, Kentucky. Two additional centers are to open in the Fall of 1968: one in Chicago, with Stanley Newman of Northeastern Illinois State College as staff director, and the other in New York City, with David York of Goddard College,as staff director.

INTRODUCTION

At a Conference on Innovation in Higher Education, convened by the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education at Winter Park, Colorado, December 1-4, 1966, a workshop explored and integrated proposals designed by a committee of faculty, students, and administrators from Antioch College and Goddard College. From this workshop emerged a proposal, in which Northeastern Illinois State College joined, to try out a new kind of off-campus center which might have a creative impact upon traditional programs in the liberal arts and the education of teachers. This planning group was joined by representatives from Monteith College.

The rationale of the experiment is that education in the liberal arts needs a strong component of confrontation with the problems of our world. Presently, most small colleges offer ivory-tower retreats from the grim realities of situations in which most human beings today are struggling to survive and to improve the conditions of their existence. Establishment of off-campus centers in settings which promote interaction of the college faculty and students with the life and needs of a very different kind of community, may be expected to lead to redefinition of the vital social issues and the content of a liberal education. Out of the interaction should emerge fresh insight into the relationship between the entrenched disciplines of our college curricula on the one hand, and the growth of human personalities toward self-actualization and effective social action on the other.

Major involvement of parent institutions is to be temporary in nature, with the Center passing into the hands of local personnel after a period of approximately five years. Depending on the needs and nature of the Center programs, students would spend periods of time varying from six months to a year at the Center. A number of seminar program and research project activities will be developed in connection with the work of the Field Study Centers. Several of these programs will be related to the student's back-home institution as in the conduct of week-end seminars and planning sessions, which would bring faculty and students (in addition to those already at the Center) to the Field Study Center to aid in program development.

Several sites have been and continue to be investigated during this feasibility study. These site explorations fall under the categories originally planned: The Inner-City, Appalachia, Suburbia; and an underdeveloped region. In addition to site explorations, the feasibility study has given consideration to making such centers economically feasible (without sizeable grants from outside agencies), and to problems involved in the administration and coordination of such a program. Two Centers have been established: one on Kauai, Hawaii, and one in Pikeville, Kentucky, and two more are projected for the Fall of 1968: one for inner-city Chicago, the other for New York City.

METHODS AND FINDINGS

Four inter-institutional teams of faculty, students, and administrators, were set up to carry out the site and program explorations for the four designated categories. Each team operated independently under the overall supervision of the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education board and staff.

A statement by Professor McCleery sets forth the basic guidelines the groups used in their site considerations.

Conditions governing site selection

In order to weigh the advantages of any particular field project, it is well to specify the conditions it must meet. While it is improbable that any setting can satisfy all of these conditions in full, their use in site selection will permit us to minimize some hazards and weight others involved in these inherently uncertain ventures. It may be wise to proportion our risks to the resources we are able to invest, starting with a modest task and building the experience applicable to more serious challenges.

1. The most obvious requirement is that there be some set of problems to be solved or challenges to be met in the situation. However, to recruit scholars to such challenges and generate skills widely applicable in the modern world, the problems must not be unique to one locality. They sould be issues of considerable extent and urgency, or matters on which competence may be demanded in the future.

2. If our temporary task-force is to create structures for problem-solving and social action, some element of the resident population must recognize its problems and seek aid in their solution. Otherwise, little will remain on our departure. Hence, the problems should be those which lend themselves to reasonably common definitions and hypotheses for action. At the same time, if we are to test our capacity to be creative, we must walk a fine line between being co-opted by existing institutions and being rejected by the local people.

3. The problems must admit of, at least, partial or possible solution. This rules out doing pennance in situations of hopeless poverty or utter desolation. To ask that problems take the form of list opportunities or wasted resources is to require that there be opportunities and resources. We must assume that knowledge, skill, and cooperative effort will substitute, in part, for factors of land or capital in the production of some good. The test of those assumptions constitutes the "feedback" to the parent colleges.

4. Applying a theory of selective deprivation, we assume that resources we bring will be relevant to needs in the situation and that challenges in that environment will be relevant to our own needs. At a minimum, we require a test of the adequacy of our knowledge, skills and concepts. At a maximum, we seek cross-cultural contacts to exchange perspectives on the world and modes of response within it. In any case, there must be research possibilities.

5. The site should provide mundane facilities for shelter and subsistence at a reasonable cost if we are to have resources left to address to the problems of the environment. The ideal circumstance would be one in which our task-force could live off the land, or draw support from local institutions, without loss of integrity or unreasonable imposition on limited local resources.

6. Finally, site selection is governed to some degree by the logistics of administration and communication. The field study center should serve as a force for innovation in parent colleges by feeding back experience and demands for more relevant instruction there. Funds spent on travel are resources lost for action. Field centers should recruit creative people to study in the sponsoring institutions. In order to retain flexibility and mobility in a field center, administrative overhead should be held to a minimum, and that may dictate keeping it close to its base of operations.

1. Underdeveloped Region

Primary attention of this group was turned to the island of Kauai, an underdeveloped island long familiar to Professor McCleery of Antioch. Professors McCleery of Antioch and Carter of Goddard, worked for one month during Project Changeover with Walter Steiger, the Director of the new Kauai Community College in Hawaii. They, with a group of fifteen students (with representation from Antioch, Goddard, and Nasson) began operations in September. Students and faculty are working in conjunction with the University of Hawaii and the Kauai Technical School, to establish a new type of community college to meet the problems of this underdeveloped island. A major focus of the college will be social and economic development, thus making research, service, and consulting agencies - rather than classrooms - its core. Examples of projects of the Union college students this year are: 1) An engineering major will bring the perspective of that discipline to the island's problems and to the task of designing educational technologies suitable to the community college, 2) Biology majors will explore ways to use the reef and wilderness areas as outdoor laboratories for instruction in life sciences. They will explore possibilities of fisheries research and development, 3) Literature and drama majors will attempt to develop a theatre project with local people and materials of the local culture. Faculty salaries are paid by the University of Hawaii, student tuitions cover transportation and program costs.

Some exploration has also been given to the possibility of establishing a Field Study Center at one or more American Indian reservations, however, activities in this area are being held pending further experience at the other Center programs.

2. Appalachia

Thorsten Horton, a recent Goddard graduate, began work September 1st as staff director for the Appalachian Field Study Center, located near Pikeville, Kentucky. In selecting the site, he had the aid of Harry Caudill, author of Night Comes to the Cumerlands, and Joe Mulloy of Appalachian Volunteers. Both are enthusiastic about the Center and will continue to be of help to it. Pike County has been the site of recent confrontations

about strip mining between coal companies and local people. It is also an area in which a number of projects (AV's, OEO Projects, Glen Mary Sisters) are already underway, some effectively, others not. Because of the problems of the area and the variety of things going on, students and faculty will be presented with an unusual number of possible projects. Program activities are being carried on this year on a limited scale in preparation for full-scale (20 students) operation beginning in September, 1968. Presently, there are two Goddard students there working with Thorsten Horton. Beginning in January, there will be 8 or 9 students there, possibly from Antioch, Bard, and Nasson. They will assist Thorsten half time in the planning and development of the Center, and then will spend the rest of their time in projects of their own special interest. It is expected that the program will make major use of short and long-term seminars, made up of visiting students and faculty from Union colleges and local people connection with the work of the Center. It is hoped that the Center will be self-supporting from tuitions within two years. We have applied to the New World and Babcock Foundations for small grants to supplement tuitions for operating expenses this year.

3. Inner-City

A number of good projects have been explored in the New York area: one in East Harlem (working with the Rev. Melvin Schoonover); one in Hoboken (working with the Rev. William Shirley); one in Newark, New Jersey (working with Newark social agencies). The most promising now seems to be work with 15 recently established Community Corporations which control the anti-poverty program in areas of major disadvantage. Each now has an educational director and most of these would welcome a few student apprentices. The Community Corporations are suppose to integrate the efforts of OEO, the Community Development Agency, the Council Against Poverty, the Human Resources Administration, Mobilization for Youth, etc. Hence, there will be scores of developing activities under each corporation.

The plan now is for a faculty member and his family to move into a sizeable apartment in a central location (probably Lower East Side). The apartment (or one near-by) would serve as a center for educational and social affairs of the

college students who are participating, but the student projects would be carried on in several different poverty areas. Centers for recreation and education are already set up in some areas and more are coming. Students would live in rooms in the areas where they work. Professor David York of Goddard College, with his wife, an artist, have indicated willingness to begin in September of 1968, and Professors York and Watson will be giving time to a study of the various possibilities in the area. Student tuition should furnish faculty salary and affiliated agencies should provide suitable facilities for most activities.

In addition the the Inner-City Center to be opened in New York in the Fall of 1968, it is expected that a second Inner-City Center will be opened next Fall in the Uptown Community of Chicago. Approximately 24,000 Southern White migrants and some 8,000 Amerindians reside in this area. The Center would seek to address itself to the many problems faced by the Southern Whites in making the transition from the rural to an urban way of life, and by the Indian population in moving from a tribal to an urban way of life. Professor Stanley Newman of Northeastern Illinois State College is director of this program.

4. Suburbia

Inquiries in Grosse Point, Michigan; Scarsdale, New York; Great Neck, Long Island; Greenwich and Westport, Connecticut, have evoked prompt and enthusiastic cooperation of local leaders. Many of them want to start planning immediately. We believe it is unwise to begin this process until the faculty person or persons who are to direct the center have been chosen. The affluent suburb is a setting new to many students. Its problems of familty discord, youth, wild-life, lack of community feeling, race and class segregation, are as real as those of poverty areas, but present serious tactical difficulties. Wise, diplomatic faculty leadership is as much needed here as anywhere. When the right persons are available, action can begin.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our study has shown that the Field Study Center model is indeed feasible in different settings, as the established and projected Centers indicate. Union institutions are in various stages of establishing financial and crediting procedures to enable themselves to participate. Further explorations will continue as we identify particular faculty members in any of the Union institutions who are interested enough in the model and in a particular type of setting to commit themselves for a year to the exploration of sites and establishment of a Center. Recruitment of both faculty and students for ongoing and new centers will become increasingly easier as the idea becomes more well known in the institutions, both through people returning from the field and through the connections (seminars, etc.) established between the Centers and parent institutions. Returning faculty and students (while they are in the field and upon their return) will also give us materials to aid us in the evaluation of the programs.